

ECON 125 — U.S. Economic History

Quarter: Fall 2025

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Office Hours: E2 403E Tu:9:30-11:30

Lecture Schedule: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays · 1:20-2:25

Location: Stevenson Academy 150

1. Course Overview

Welcome to **ECON 125: U.S. Economic History** — where we explore the **choices, conflicts, and trade-offs** that built the economy you live in today.

This isn't a class about memorizing dates or chasing trivia. It's about **stories** — how people, institutions, and ideas collided to shape the nation's economic path. At every turning point, leaders faced hard questions:

- How do we balance **growth and equity**?
- When should the **government step in**, and when should it step back?
- Who carries the costs, and who reaps the rewards?

You'll spend this quarter learning to **think like an economic historian**. That means moving from **framework → evidence → argument**: connecting theory to real-world policies, weighing winners and losers, and developing your own case about what lessons history holds for today's challenges.

To structure our journey, we'll move through **four major chapters** — each one a period when the U.S. faced critical choices that reshaped its economy, society, and role in the world.

Chapter 1: Foundations of the American Economy (1785–1877)

We start at the beginning — building an economy from scratch. This chapter explores how early institutions, westward expansion, slavery, and emerging industries shaped the nation's first century. We'll look at **banking experiments, canals and railroads, tariffs and trade, and the brutal realities of forced labor**. We'll end with the **Civil War and Reconstruction**, when the country tried — and often failed — to redefine **economic citizenship**.

Here, you'll begin to see the **deep roots of inequality** and the competing visions of prosperity that still echo today.

Chapter 2: Fractures & Transformation (1878–1945)

The Industrial Titans arrive: **Carnegie, Rockefeller, Morgan**. Wealth concentrates, labor fights back, and new technologies reshape entire markets. This chapter traces the rise of **corporate giants, financial panics, antitrust battles, Progressive reforms, union struggles**, and the growing **power of the federal government**.

We'll also examine the biggest economic experiment of all: the **New Deal response to the Great Depression**. The lessons here are foundational for modern debates about government intervention, social safety nets, and the balance between efficiency and equity. We close with **World War II mobilization**, where the federal government transforms from referee to central planner — forever changing its role in the economy.

Chapter 3: Rebuilding the Middle Class (1946–1980)

This is the era of **postwar prosperity** — but only for some. We'll explore the **GI Bill, Bretton Woods, suburbanization, Cold War defense spending, and consumer culture**. America becomes the world's economic powerhouse, but under the surface, cracks begin to show:

- **Stagflation** challenges economic orthodoxy.
- **Deindustrialization** hollows out entire regions.
- **Racial wealth gaps** persist, revealing the limits of policy-driven opportunity.

This period lets us ask hard questions about **what “shared prosperity” really means**, who benefited from it, and why that consensus eventually unraveled.

Chapter 4: Rethinking the American Dream (1981–2022)

Enter the age of **Reaganomics, globalization, and financialization**. Deregulation reshapes markets, trade shocks transform industries, and technology fuels innovation and inequality at the same time. We'll trace the rise of **neoliberal policies**, explore the **2008 financial crisis**, and analyze **COVID-19's economic disruptions** — all the way to today's policy battles over inequality, automation, and sustainability.

This chapter connects directly to **your world**. You'll learn how policies made before you were born are shaping your job market, your housing costs, and your future economic opportunities.

Throughout these four chapters, you'll learn to:

- **Think like an economic historian** — using **frameworks** to explain why key decisions happened and what they set in motion.
- **Analyze trade-offs** — understanding who gained, who lost, and why those choices mattered.
- **Use evidence effectively** — connecting historical data, policy documents, and economic theory to support your arguments.
- **Make your case** — in reflections, group debates, and essays where you develop and defend your own perspective.

This class is **discussion-driven** and **argument-heavy**. Some weeks, you'll team up to debate policy choices; other weeks, you'll reflect on what we've learned or write essays that dive deeper into major themes. My job is to give you the tools, context, and data; **your job is to wrestle with the big questions and build arguments that matter**.

What This Class Is (and isn't)

This course is **discussion-driven** and **argument-heavy**. You'll read, analyze, debate, and write — not just absorb. Some weeks, you'll team up with classmates for group debates and simulations. Other weeks, you'll reflect individually or dive deeper into a theme through essays.

My job is to give you tools, context, and data. **Your job is to wrestle with the big questions:**

- Why were these choices made?
- What trade-offs were ignored?
- How do the same dilemmas resurface today?

This isn't about finding "right answers." It's about learning to **build strong arguments** grounded in evidence — and to understand how history helps explain the policies and crises shaping the economy now.

This isn't a class where you sit back and passively absorb information. This is a class where you **think, argue, and connect the past to the economic decisions shaping your future**.

By the end of the quarter, you won't just know what happened. You'll know **why it happened**, how we know, and what lessons it offers for the future.

2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you won't just know a timeline of events — you'll understand the **forces, trade-offs, and decisions** that shaped the U.S. economy and learn how to **make your own arguments** about what history teaches us today.

This class is designed to help you **think like an economic historian**. That means you'll move beyond memorization and practice building connections between **frameworks, evidence, and arguments** — the foundation of all the work you'll do here, from reflections to debates to essays.

Here's what you'll be able to do by the end of the quarter:

1. Understand the Big Picture

You'll trace how the U.S. economy evolved across **four major chapters**:

- Building foundations (1785–1877)
- Industrial transformation (1878–1945)
- Postwar prosperity and unraveling (1946–1980)
- Globalization and inequality (1981–2022)

You'll see how policies, crises, and social movements created ripple effects — shaping jobs, wages, wealth, and opportunity for generations.

2. Connect Frameworks to Evidence

This course blends **economic theory, historical narrative, and data literacy**. You'll learn how to:

- Use **economic frameworks** — like comparative advantage, market failures, or policy multipliers — to interpret events.
- Read **historical data** (wages, GDP, inequality measures) and evaluate what it reveals about growth and distribution.
- Combine **qualitative and quantitative evidence** to tell a more complete story.

3. Evaluate Trade-Offs

Economic history is full of hard choices — and almost none of them had simple answers. You'll practice weighing competing priorities:

- Efficiency vs. equity
- Growth vs. stability
- Individual opportunity vs. collective welfare
- Free markets vs. government intervention

By looking at who **benefited** and who **paid the costs**, you'll learn to see the real-world consequences behind economic models and policy decisions.

4. Build and Defend Arguments

In **reflections, essays, and debates**, you'll practice making clear, persuasive cases. That means:

- Starting with a strong **thesis** — a claim you can defend.
- Supporting it with **historical evidence, economic data, and theory**.
- Engaging directly with **counterarguments** — because in this class, the best answers come from wrestling with opposing ideas, not avoiding them.

This isn't about memorizing "the right answer." It's about **learning how to think, not what to think**.

5. Apply History to Today's Economy

Every topic we cover connects directly to the world you live in:

- How the GI Bill shaped housing markets you're trying to enter today.
- Why Cold War defense budgets still influence where industries and jobs are clustered.
- How the 2008 crisis reshaped the labor market Gen Z is walking into.
- Why inequality, debt, and automation debates look familiar — because we've fought over them before.

By learning to **see patterns across time**, you'll develop the ability to use history as a lens for making sense of today's policy debates and future challenges.

6. Communicate Like an Economist

You'll get consistent practice writing, debating, and presenting your ideas. By the end of the course, you'll be able to:

- Write **clear, structured essays** that connect frameworks, evidence, and analysis.
- Craft **concise reflections** that distill big lessons into focused insights.
- Debate policy in real time, working within teams to defend a position persuasively.

These aren't just academic skills — they're **transferable tools** for analyzing arguments, reading data critically, and explaining complex ideas clearly to any audience.

Why These Outcomes Matter

Economic history is where theory meets reality. You'll leave this course able to:

- Break down policy debates into **their core economic logic**.
- Recognize how **past choices shape current opportunities and constraints**.
- Communicate your ideas with clarity, confidence, and evidence.

In short: you'll finish ECON 125 with the tools to **think deeply, argue persuasively, and connect the past to the policy choices shaping your future**.

3. Required Materials

You don't need to buy an expensive textbook for this class. **All assigned readings, data visualizations, and assignment packets** will be posted directly on **Canvas**. I've designed the reading list to give you the tools you need — **not busywork** — so every reading connects directly to **reflections, essays, and debates**.

Think of these readings as your **evidence base**: the arguments, data, and historical voices you'll use to build your own case.

Assigned Readings by Chapter

These are short, curated readings — a mix of historical documents, scholarly excerpts, and data-driven analyses — provided on Canvas. They are required because they directly support your **reflections, essays, and in-class debates**.

Chapter 1: Foundations of the American Economy (1785–1877)

Building an economy from scratch: markets, slavery, and the nation's first economic divides

Assigned Readings:

1. **Alexander Hamilton — “Report on Manufactures” (1791)** *(Primary Source)*
 - Hamilton’s vision for industrial development, tariffs, and federal power.
2. **Douglass North — “The United States in 1800: Growth and Structure”** *(Excerpt)*
 - Explains early banking, trade, and regional economic differences.
3. **Gavin Wright — “Slavery and the Cotton Economy”** *(Excerpt)*
 - How slavery shaped U.S. industrialization and financial growth.

Optional Deep Dives:

- Douglass North — *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790–1860*
 - Walter Johnson — *River of Dark Dreams*
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Chapter 2: Fractures & Transformation (1878–1945)

Industrial titans, rising inequality, financial crises, and the New Deal’s reshaping of government power

Assigned Readings:

1. **Ida Tarbell — *The History of the Standard Oil Company* (1904, excerpt)** *(Primary Source)*
 - Investigative journalism that exposed monopolistic practices.
2. **Christina Romer — “The Great Crash and the Onset of the Great Depression”** *(Journal Article)*
 - A concise, data-driven explanation of the causes of the Depression.

3. **Franklin D. Roosevelt — “First Inaugural Address” (1933)** (*Primary Source*)

- FDR’s vision for recovery and redefining government’s role in the economy.

Optional Deep Dives:

- Richard White — *Railroaded*
 - Lizabeth Cohen — *Making a New Deal*
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Chapter 3: Rebuilding the Middle Class (1946–1980)

Postwar prosperity, Cold War budgets, suburbanization, and the unraveling of industrial America

Assigned Readings:

1. **Milton Friedman — “The Role of Monetary Policy” (1968, excerpt)** (*Journal Article*)
 - Friedman’s challenge to Keynesian orthodoxy and his framework for managing inflation.
2. **Lizabeth Cohen — “Suburban Dreams, Consumer Realities”** (*Excerpt from A Consumers’ Republic**)
 - How suburbanization and consumer spending shaped opportunity and inequality.
3. **The Moynihan Report (1965)** (*Primary Source*)
 - A landmark policy document analyzing racial inequality and persistent poverty.

Optional Deep Dives:

- Milton Friedman — *Capitalism and Freedom*
 - Judith Stein — *Pivotal Decade*
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Chapter 4: Rethinking the American Dream (1981–2022)

Deregulation, globalization, financialization, and the new era of inequality

Assigned Readings:

1. **Milton & Rose Friedman — *Free to Choose* (1980, Ch. 1 excerpt)**
 - Friedman’s accessible explanation of free-market philosophy and deregulation.
2. **David Autor — “Work of the Past, Work of the Future” (2019)** (*MIT Working Paper*)

- A data-rich, readable analysis of automation, trade shocks, and labor markets.
3. **Thomas Piketty — “Inequality in the Long Run” (2014)** (*Science Magazine*)
- A short, graphical summary of wealth concentration and its policy implications.

Optional Deep Dives:

- Thomas Piketty — *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*
 - Joseph Stiglitz — *The Price of Inequality*
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How to Use These Readings

- **Reflections:** Use assigned readings to back up your insights.
- **Essays:** Build arguments with data, theory, and historical evidence.
- **Debates:** Draw on readings to defend your team’s position and anticipate counterarguments.

Optional readings are **not required** — they’re there if you want to go deeper, sharpen your essays, or explore perspectives we only touch on in lecture.

Key Takeaways for Students

- Everything required is **free** and posted on **Canvas**.
 - Assigned readings are **short and intentional** — they directly connect to assignments.
 - Optional readings are for students who want to **dig deeper** or strengthen essays.
 - The goal isn’t to memorize dates or facts — it’s to **use evidence to build arguments**.
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4. Course Structure

This isn’t a class where you sit back, take notes, and memorize dates for an exam. **ECON 125** is built around **learning by doing** — analyzing evidence, debating policy trade-offs, and writing arguments that connect the past to the present.

The course blends **lectures, active learning, reflections, and essays** into one ecosystem. Each part is designed to build the skills you’ll need to **think like an economic historian**: using

framework → evidence → argument to understand historical decisions and make your own case.

Here's how the pieces fit together:

A. Lectures — Building the Frameworks

When: Mondays & Wednesdays

Purpose: Introduce historical context, economic theories, and data insights.

- Lectures set up the **big questions** we'll tackle in active learning, reflections, and essays.
- I'll break down **key turning points**, analyze policies, and show you how economists interpret historical data.
- Slides and supplemental materials are always posted on **Canvas** — so if you miss class, you can catch up without falling behind.

Example:

When we study the Great Depression, lecture sets up **what happened, why it happened, and what policymakers tried**. Then, in active learning, you'll **debate whether government should have intervened differently**.

B. Active Learning — Testing the Trade-Offs

When: Fridays

Purpose: Apply frameworks and evidence to real historical and policy dilemmas.

Fridays are where we **test ideas, challenge assumptions, and work in teams**. You'll join a group of **3–5 students** (pre-assigned on Canvas) to analyze a scenario, prepare arguments, and present your conclusions.

- You'll use **data, primary sources, and economic reasoning** to make your case.
- Each session ends with **peer dialogue** and **short written reflections** that count toward your grade.
- If you **miss class** or are **more than 50 minutes late**, you'll complete an **essay** instead — same skills, different format.

Example Active Learning Topics:

- Should the U.S. government have bailed out the banks in 1907?

- Should Cold War defense spending have taken priority over domestic investment?
 - Do Reagan-era tax reforms explain modern inequality trends?
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C. Reflections — Making Sense of What We Learned

Purpose: Connect what we covered in lecture and active learning.

- Short, **400–500 word** assignments responding to guided prompts.
- Focus on integrating **assigned readings, historical data, and group debates**.
- Designed to help you **practice argument-building in low-stakes settings** before tackling essays.

Reflections are due on **Canvas** by **11:59 PM the same day** as the active learning session, unless otherwise stated.

Pro Tip: Use your reflection to **capture your strongest ideas** — they often become the foundation for essays later in the quarter.

D. Essays — Building and Defending Your Case

Purpose: Write deeper, evidence-based arguments that connect historical turning points to broader themes.

- Essays replace missed active learning sessions **or** extend your analysis beyond in-class debates.
- You'll integrate **frameworks, readings, and data** to defend a position with clarity and precision.
- Each essay has a **specific prompt, technical requirements, and rubric** posted on Canvas.

Examples of Essay Prompts:

- Did the GI Bill expand opportunity or deepen inequality?
 - Were the costs of NAFTA outweighed by its benefits?
 - Has globalization accelerated or reversed the American Dream?
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E. How It All Fits Together

Component	When	Purpose	Connected Skills
Lectures	Mon & Wed	Build frameworks & historical context	Understanding events, interpreting data
Active Learning	Fri	Apply theories to policy debates	Collaboration, persuasive framing
Reflections	Same day, 11:59 PM	Connect lectures, debates, and readings	Critical thinking, synthesis
Essays	Posted on Canvas	Defend a position using evidence	Argument-building, deep analysis

Everything is designed to **layer skills**:

- Lectures give you **context**.
- Active learning lets you **test ideas**.
- Reflections help you **synthesize evidence**.
- Essays let you **defend your position**.

By the end of the quarter, you'll be able to **trace the big story of the U.S. economy, evaluate trade-offs, and build your own evidence-driven arguments** about where we've been — and where we're headed.

Why This Matters

With 120 students, it's easy to get lost if expectations aren't clear. This structure keeps us **organized and consistent**:

- You'll always know what's due, when, and why it matters.
- Assignments build on one another — nothing exists in isolation.
- Every activity connects back to the same goal: **learning to think like an economic historian**.

5. Assignments & Deliverables

This course blends lectures, active learning, reflections, and essays into one ecosystem. Everything you do builds toward one goal: **learning to think like an economic historian** by connecting **framework → evidence → argument**.

You'll use historical documents, economic data, and scholarly arguments to develop your own positions. That means your work is less about "getting the right answer" and more about **building a strong case** using evidence.

A. Grading Breakdown

Category	Weight	Purpose
Essays	30%	Longer, evidence-based arguments where you develop and defend a position using historical data, assigned readings, and economic frameworks.
Active Learning Participation	20%	Group debates, policy simulations, and in-class exercises where you test frameworks in real time.
Reflections	20%	Short, guided responses connecting lectures, debates, and readings into focused takeaways.
Reading Responses	10%	Brief, targeted assignments on weekly readings to prepare for class discussions and debates.
Final Policy Impact Analysis	20%	A capstone essay where you synthesize everything we've covered, applying lessons from multiple chapters to a modern policy challenge.

Total: 100%

B. Assignment Types

1. Reflections (*20% of final grade*)

Purpose: Short, focused responses that connect lectures, debates, and readings into your own takeaways.

- **Length:** 400–500 words

- **Due:** Same day as active learning by **11:59 PM** on Canvas
- **Format:** Guided prompts will direct your response — connecting readings, evidence, and group discussions.
- **Grading Style:**
 - You get full credit when you demonstrate thoughtful engagement, synthesis, and clarity.
 - Minor writing issues won't affect your grade as long as your ideas are well-developed.
 - Late penalties: **–10% per day**, up to three days.

Tips for Success:

- Reference **assigned readings** directly to strengthen your insights.
- Make connections between **lectures, debates, and data**.
- Treat reflections as a **low-stakes space** to develop ideas you'll later expand into essays.

2. Essays (30% of final grade)

Purpose: Develop a deeper, evidence-based argument that answers a specific prompt using historical data, assigned readings, and economic frameworks.

- **Length:** 1,000–1,400 words
- **Submission:** Upload to **Canvas** as **Word or PDF**
- **Required:**
 - Chicago-style citations
 - At least **two outside sources** in addition to assigned readings
 - At least **one visual** (chart, figure, or table) on its own page with a title and caption
- **Technical Requirements:**
 - Bold section headings
 - Double-spacing, 12pt readable font

- Minimum **five complete, non-redundant sentences** per paragraph

Grading Style:

- Essays are graded **strictly** using a detailed rubric.
- Strong thesis, structured argumentation, integration of evidence, and technical precision are all required.
- Missing formatting or citation requirements will result in point deductions (see Section 6).

Tips for Success:

- Start early — essays require **more depth** than reflections.
 - Use assigned readings **and** at least two outside sources to strengthen your case.
 - Anticipate counterarguments — the strongest essays engage opposing views.
 - Check Canvas for prompts, examples, and detailed rubrics.
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3. Active Learning Participation (20% of final grade)

Fridays are **hands-on learning days**: debates, policy simulations, and team-based analysis. You'll work in **small groups of 3–5 students** (pre-assigned on Canvas) to evaluate historical dilemmas and present your conclusions.

- **Deliverables:** Group notes, short presentations, or written submissions (varies by session).
- **Grading Style:** Based on **attendance, preparation, and contribution quality**.
- **If you miss class or arrive more than 30 minutes late:**
 - You must submit the **related essay** to earn credit for that session.

Examples of Active Learning Topics:

- Should the U.S. have adopted Hamilton's industrial vision in the 1790s?
 - Was the New Deal a rescue mission or government overreach?
 - Did Reaganomics accelerate or undermine long-term prosperity?
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4. Reading Responses (10% of final grade)

Purpose: Short, targeted assignments that prepare you for lectures, debates, and active learning sessions.

- **Length:** 250–300 words
- **Due:** Before lecture on Canvas (deadlines posted weekly)
- **Grading Style:** Primarily completion-based but evaluated for genuine effort and engagement.

Tips for Success:

- Use these to **test your understanding** of assigned readings before debates.
 - Don't overthink — focus on clarity and connecting the material to course themes.
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5. Final Policy Impact Analysis (20% of final grade)

This is your **capstone assignment** — the place where you bring together everything we've learned to analyze a **modern policy challenge**.

- **Length:** 1,200–1,600 words
- **Task:** Choose a current economic issue (e.g., inequality, globalization, automation, housing markets) and connect it to **at least two historical chapters** we've covered.
- **Required:**
 - Chicago-style citations
 - At least **three assigned readings**
 - At least one **visual with caption** on its own page
- **Grading Style:** Strict, essay-level rigor — synthesis, depth, and originality matter most.

Tips for Success:

- Use this assignment to **connect dots across periods** — show me how history explains today's dilemmas.
- Build from your strongest essays and reflections to save time and deepen analysis.
- Start early; this is weighted the same as all your essays combined.

C. Strict vs. Flexible Grading Expectations

Assignment Type	Expectations	Grading Rigor	Key Strategy
Reflections	Connect lectures, debates, and readings; demonstrate engagement and synthesis.	Flexible — generous grading; participation-driven.	Focus on reasoning, not perfection.
Essays	Develop deep, structured arguments using multiple sources and data.	Strict — high bar for thesis clarity, evidence use, and formatting.	Plan early, integrate readings, anticipate counterarguments.
Final Policy Analysis	Apply lessons from multiple periods to a modern policy challenge.	Strict — capstone-level expectations, essay-level rigor.	Synthesize ideas across chapters for a broader narrative.
Active Learning	Contribute meaningfully, prepare evidence, engage in discussions.	Moderate — based on attendance, preparation, and contributions.	Come ready to collaborate and defend positions.
Reading Responses	Show basic engagement with assigned readings.	Light — mostly completion-based.	Use these as prep for debates and essays.

D. Late Work Policy

- **Reflections & Reading Responses:** –10% per day, up to **three days late**. After three days, no credit.
- **Essays & Final Policy Analysis:** –5% per day, up to **five days late**. After five days, no credit unless pre-approved.
- **Active Learning Sessions:** No makeup participation, but you can submit the related alternate essay for full credit.
- **Emergencies:** Contact me **as soon as possible**: timing matters — communication matters.

E. Why This Matters

This structure rewards **engagement, preparation, and depth**:

- Essays + Final Policy Analysis = **50% combined** → long-form argument-building matters most.
- Reflections + Active Learning = **40% combined** → staying engaged week-to-week keeps you on track.
- Reading Responses = **10%** → low-stakes but ensures you come prepared.

Everything in this course is designed to **build on itself**:

- What you read fuels debates.
 - What you debate drives reflections.
 - Reflections grow into essays.
 - Essays feed directly into your capstone analysis.
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6. Technical Requirements & Formatting

Clear formatting, consistent organization, and proper citation are **non-negotiable** in this course. Why? Because part of learning to **think like an economist** is learning to **communicate like one** — your arguments need to be structured, supported, and presented professionally.

These standards apply to **essays, reflections, and the final policy impact analysis** unless otherwise specified.

A. Formatting Standards

Requirement	Standard	Common Deductions
File Type	Submit as Word (.docx) or PDF through Canvas.	–2 if wrong file type
Font	Verdana, Calibri, Tahoma, or Arial, 12pt	–1 for inconsistent font use

Requirement	Standard	Common Deductions
Text Color / Background	Black text on white background only	–1 if violated
Spacing	Double-spaced, one blank line between paragraphs	–1 if skipped
Paragraphs	At least 5 complete, non-redundant sentences per paragraph	–4 per short paragraph
Headings	Bold section titles required (no italics or underlining)	–2 if missing or inconsistent
Headers	First page must include: Your Name, Student ID, Course Number	–1 if missing

B. Citation & Reference Requirements

All essays and the **Final Policy Impact Analysis** must follow **Chicago Author-Date style**:

- In-text citations look like: **(Piketty 2014, 56)**
- References go on the final page under **“References”** or **“Works Cited”**
- At least **two outside scholarly sources** required for essays
- At least **three assigned readings** required for the **Final Policy Impact Analysis**

Deductions:

- Missing in-text citations **–3**
- Missing references page **–3**
- **Both missing citations & references page: –10**

Pro Tip: Canvas includes a **Chicago quick guide** for citation formatting.

C. Figures, Charts, and Tables

Every essay and the **Final Policy Impact Analysis** must include at least **one visual element**:

- **Acceptable visuals:** charts, graphs, tables, or images directly supporting your argument
- **Placement:** Each figure goes **on its own page after the conclusion but before the References page**
- **Title & Caption:**
 - A **title** at the top of the page
 - A **2+ sentence caption below** explaining why the figure matters

Deductions:

- Missing required figure –5
 - Missing caption –3
 - Wrong placement –2
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D. Submission Guidelines

- **Where to Submit:** Always upload to Canvas — email submissions are **not accepted**.
 - **Multiple Submissions:** You may submit multiple times before the deadline — Canvas always records the **latest version**.
 - **Turnitin Integration:** Submissions are automatically checked for similarity to maintain academic integrity.
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E. Academic Integrity & AI Use

- All assignments must reflect **your original thinking**.
 - **Responsible AI use:**
 - You may use AI tools for brainstorming, organization, or locating credible sources **if disclosed** in the citations.
 - You **may not** use AI to generate essays, citations, or fabricated data.
 - Plagiarism, fabrication, or undisclosed AI use will result in **zero credit** and may be reported per UCSC policy.
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F. Deduction Summary Table

Violation	Deduction
Missing bold section headings	-2
Missing required figure or graph	-5
Missing caption page	-3
Missing in-text citations	-3
Missing References page	-3
Both citations & References missing	-10
Short paragraphs (<5 sentences)	-4 per paragraph
Incorrect font / size / spacing	-1 per issue
Missing name, ID, or course header	-1
Wrong figure placement	-2
Incorrect file type	-2

*There is **no cap** on technical deductions — missing multiple elements will stack.*

G. How to Avoid Losing Points

- **Start early** — last-minute formatting leads to deductions.
 - Use the **assignment templates** on Canvas for proper structure.
 - Check your paper **against the technical checklist** before submitting.
 - Ask questions during office hours if anything is unclear.
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Key Takeaways

- These technical standards are **strict** because professional communication matters.

- You'll lose fewer points for small formatting errors than for weak arguments — but both affect your grade.
- Canvas includes **examples, templates, and guides** for essays, reflections, and the Final Policy Impact Analysis.

7. Course Schedule & Weekly Flow

All assigned readings, response prompts, reflection prompts, and essay instructions will be on **Canvas**.

Weekly cadence:

- **Reading Responses** due **Weds 11:59 PM** (weekly)
- **Reflections** due **Fri 11:59 PM** (Weeks **2, 3, 5, 7, 8**)
- **Active Learning** in class every **Friday**
- Essays: **Week 6 & Week 9** (Fri)
- Final Policy Impact Analysis: **Week 10** (Fri)

Chapter 1: Foundations of the American Economy (1785–1877)

Institutions, slavery, expansion, early markets.

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings	Active Learning	Due This Week
1	Course Intro & Frameworks	Hamilton — <i>Report on Manufactures</i> (ex.)	—	—
2	Market Revolution & Federal Power	Douglass North — “U.S. in 1800: Growth & Structure”	Debate: Hamilton vs. Jefferson	Reading Response #1 (Wed) · Reflection #1 (Fri)
3	Slavery, Cotton, & Capitalism	Gavin Wright — “Slavery & the Cotton Economy”	Simulation: Expansion vs. Moral Limits	Reading Response #2 (Wed) · Reflection #2 (Fri)

Optional deep dives: North, *Economic Growth of the U.S.* · Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*

Chapter 2: Fractures & Transformation (1878–1945)

Industrial titans, inequality, crises, the New Deal.

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings	Active Learning	Due This Week
4	Industrialization & the Gilded Age	Ida Tarbell — <i>History of Standard Oil</i> (ex.)	Debate: Regulate monopolies?	Reading Response #3 (Wed)
5	The Great Depression	Christina Romer — “The Great Crash”	Simulation: Recovery strategies	Reading Response #4 (Wed) · Reflection #3 (Fri)
6	The New Deal & Gov’t Power	FDR — “First Inaugural Address”	Debate: Rescue vs. overreach	Reading Response #5 (Wed) · Essay #1 (Fri)

Optional deep dives: White, *Railroaded* · Cohen, *Making a New Deal*

Chapter 3: Rebuilding the Middle Class (1946–1980)

Postwar growth, suburbanization, unraveling industry.

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings	Active Learning	Due This Week
7	The “Golden Age” & Competing Ideas	Milton Friedman — “Role of Monetary Policy” (ex.)	Debate: Keynes vs. Friedman	Reading Response #6 (Wed) · Reflection #4 (Fri)
8	Suburbanization & Inequality	Lizabeth Cohen — “Suburban Dreams” (ex.)	Simulation: Housing policy trade-offs	Reading Response #7 (Wed) · Reflection #5 (Fri)
9	The 1970s Crisis	Moynihan Report (ex.)	Debate: Inflation vs. unemployment	Reading Response #8 (Wed) · Essay #2 (Fri)

Optional deep dives: Friedman, *Capitalism & Freedom* · Stein, *Pivotal Decade*

Chapter 4: Rethinking the American Dream (1981–2022)

Globalization, deregulation, tech, inequality.

Week	Topics	Assigned Readings	Active Learning	Due This Week
10	Technology, Globalization & Inequality	Friedman & Friedman — <i>Free to Choose</i> (ex.); Autor — “Work of the Past, Work of the Future”	Final Policy Simulation	Reading Response #9 (Wed) · Final Policy Impact Analysis (Fri)

Optional deep dives: Piketty, *Capital in the 21st Century* · Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*

Key Assignment Deadlines (Aligned to the Schedule)

- **Reading Responses (9):** Weeks 2–10, **Weds** (10%)
- **Reflections (5):** Weeks 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, **Fri** (20% total)
- **Essay #1:** Week 6, **Fri** (15%)
- **Essay #2:** Week 9, **Fri** (15%)
- **Final Policy Impact Analysis:** Week 10, **Fri** (20%)
- **Active Learning Participation:** Fridays in class (20%)

No week exceeds **2 deliverables**.

8. Course Policies

(Read this carefully — it answers 90% of student questions.)

This course is designed to be **active, collaborative, and fast-paced**. With **120 students**, clear expectations keep us all on track and make sure everyone has a fair chance to succeed.

A. Attendance & Participation

- **Active Learning Fridays are required.** Most Fridays involve **debates, simulations, or group policy work**.
- If you miss **more than 30 minutes** of an active learning session, you **must complete the related alternate essay** to earn credit.

- Participation is **20% of your grade** — showing up matters, but **engaged participation** matters more.

Tip: Your reading responses prepare you for Friday activities. Skipping them often means weaker performance in debates.

B. Late Work Policy

We balance **high standards** with **reasonable flexibility**:

Assignment Type	Late Penalty	Final Cutoff
Reading Responses	–2 points per day late	Accepted up to 1 week late
Reflections	–5% per day late	Accepted up to 1 week late
Essays	–10% per day late	No credit after 1 week
Final Policy Impact Analysis	No extensions	Due Week 10, Friday

Extensions require documented illness, family emergencies, or approved accommodations. If you anticipate an issue, **email before the deadline** whenever possible.

C. Make-Up Policy for Missed Active Learning

Active learning makes up **20% of your grade**. If you miss class:

1. Check **Canvas** for materials.
2. Complete the **make-up essay prompt** associated with that activity.
3. Submit it to Canvas by the posted deadline to receive participation credit.

Important: There are no “free skips” — if you miss a session, **you must submit the make-up essay** to stay on track.

D. Communication & Canvas Guidelines

- **Check Canvas Weekly:**
 - All reading assignments, essay prompts, and reflections live there.

- Announcements go there first.
 - **Email Policy:**
 - Use your **UCSC email** and include **ECON 125** in the subject line.
 - I typically reply **within 24 hours** on weekdays.
 - Check Canvas before emailing — many questions are answered there.
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E. Academic Integrity & AI Policy

This course allows **responsible AI use**, but it must follow **strict disclosure rules**.

What's Allowed

- Brainstorming ideas
- Outlining structure
- Clarifying concepts
- Locating credible sources (*which you verify*)

What's Not Allowed

- Copy-pasting AI-written essays or reflections
- Using AI to fabricate data or sources
- Submitting unedited AI output

AI Disclosure Rule

If you used AI in any way to **prepare, brainstorm, or outline** your work:

- **Disclose it in the References section, just like a source citation.**
- Example: *OpenAI. ChatGPT. Version GPT-5, August 2025. Assisted with brainstorming historical context for Essay #1.*
- Do **not** place a separate disclosure note at the bottom of your essay or in the introduction — the disclosure belongs **in the citations only**.

Consequences

- **Undisclosed AI use → zero credit** and possible academic misconduct reporting under UCSC policy.

- Proper disclosure protects your work and ensures transparency.
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F. Professionalism & Classroom Climate

This course covers **complex and sensitive historical topics** — slavery, inequality, globalization, taxation, and policy debates.

Our expectations:

- Debate ideas **respectfully**.
 - Support arguments with **evidence**.
 - Disagreement is expected — dismissiveness is not.
 - Our goal isn't consensus; it's learning to **argue from evidence and perspective**.
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Key Takeaways

- Fridays = **active learning**; missing one → submit a **make-up essay**.
 - Reading responses prep you for debates and strengthen your essays.
 - Late work policies are **firm but fair** — communicate early if needed.
 - AI tools = allowed **only if disclosed in your citations**.
 - Treat each other — and the material — with **curiosity and respect**.
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9. Student Support & Resources

You're not expected to navigate this course — or UCSC — on your own. There are multiple layers of support built into this class and the university. Whether you need help understanding the material, improving your writing, managing stress, or accessing accommodations, we've got you covered.

A. Office Hours & TA Contact Info

Instructor: Dr. Aaron G. Meininger

- **Office Location:** E2 403E

- **Office Hours:** Tu. 9:30-11:30
- **Email:** ameining@ucsc.edu

Teaching Assistants & Readers:

- TA names, emails, and office hour schedules will be posted on **Canvas** by Week 2.
- Your TA is your **first point of contact** for weekly assignments, reflections, and participation grading.
- For bigger questions about essays, deadlines, or course policies, email me directly.

Pro Tip: Office hours aren't just for emergencies — they're for idea-building, assignment feedback, and strategy. Use them.

B. Tutoring & Writing Support

Economics involves **argumentation and evidence**, and strong writing is essential. UCSC offers free resources to help you level up:

- **Economics Department Peer Tutors** (*if available*) — Posted in the department.
- **Writing Center @ UCSC:**
 - One-on-one sessions (in-person or online).
 - Help with brainstorming, structuring, citing, and polishing essays.
 - Book an appointment here: <https://writing.ucsc.edu>

Pro Tip: Schedule tutoring early — especially before Essay #1 and the Final Policy Impact Analysis.

C. Accessibility & Accommodations

If you have a documented disability or accommodation plan, I want you to have **full and equitable access** to course materials and activities.

- Register or update accommodations with the **Disability Resource Center (DRC):** <https://drc.ucsc.edu>
- Email me and your TA as soon as possible once your DRC plan is active so we can set up adjustments.

- If unexpected health or personal issues arise during the quarter, reach out early. We'll work together to find a solution.
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D. Mental Health & Wellness Resources

This course moves quickly, and balancing UCSC life isn't easy. You are not alone — UCSC offers free and confidential support:

- **Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS):** <https://caps.ucsc.edu>
 - Free short-term counseling
 - Crisis intervention & referrals
 - Workshops on managing stress, anxiety, and burnout
- **Slugs Support Program:** <https://deanofstudents.ucsc.edu/slug-support>
 - Assists students with housing, food security, and personal emergencies.
- **24/7 Crisis Line:** Call (831) 459-2628

Pro Tip: Academic success depends on taking care of yourself. If you're feeling overwhelmed, please reach out — to me, your TA, or UCSC support staff.

E. Canvas & Tech Support

Almost everything for this class lives on **Canvas**: reading assignments, essay prompts, reflections, active learning instructions, and grades.

- **Canvas Help Desk:** <https://its.ucsc.edu/canvas>
 - **24/7 Support Line:** (855) 761-9905
 - If Canvas goes down near a deadline, **email me and your TA immediately** — we'll sort it out.
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F. When in Doubt, Reach Out

You're juggling a lot, and this course covers **a huge period of U.S. economic history**. If you hit a wall — with the readings, the essays, or life in general — **ask for help**.

- Start with your **TA** → for reflections, active learning, and grading questions.

- Come to **office hours** → for essays, concepts, and strategy.
- Use **UCSC resources** → for writing help, tutoring, mental health, or accommodations.

We're here to help you succeed.

Key Takeaways

- Use **office hours** and **TA support** early and often.
- Take advantage of free UCSC tutoring, writing help, and study resources.
- Accommodations and flexibility exist — but **communicate early**.
- Mental health matters as much as academic performance.
- Canvas is your central hub for assignments, announcements, and grades.